

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, IN, MR

SUBJ: MAURITANIAN PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO INDIA

1. MAURITANIAN PRESIDENT MOKTAR OULD DADDAH ARRIVED IN DELHI
AUGUST 24 FOR A THREE-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO INDIA. HIS
SCHEDULE FOLLOWED THE STANDARD VIP FORMAT: MEETINGS WITH
PRESIDENT FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED. PRIME MINISTER GANDHI
AND FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN. ON THE FIRST EVEING, PRESIDENT
AHMED HOSTED A BANQUET OULD DADDAH'S HONOR AND ON AUGUST 25 MRS.
FANDHI HOSTED MUCH SUBSTANCE. DURING THE BANQUET, PRESIDENT AHMED
PRAISED
OULD DADDAH'S ROLE IN THE AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT AS
WELL AS HIS "CONCILIATORY AND MEDIATORY ROLE IN REGIONAL
AND SUB-REGIONAL AFFAIRS OF WEST AFRICA." AHMED ALSO
MADE THE USUAL CALL FOR AN END TO APARTHEID AND RACIAL
DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. IN HIS RESPONSE,
OULD DADDAH PRAISED INDIA'S ROLE IN THE LIBERATION OF
THE THIRD WORLD AND EXPRESSED HIS GRATITUDE THAT "OUR
TWO COUNTRIES NOT ONLY STAND TOGETHER IN THE NON-ALIGNED
MOVEMENT, THEY ALSO CONDEMN THE ISRAELI AGGRESSION ON
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ARAB NATIONS AND THE OCCUPATION OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE'S

LAND BY THE ZIONISTS." IN AN OBLIQUE REFERENCE TO THE WESTERN SAHARA ISSUE, HE POINTED TO MAURITANIA'S RESOLUTION OF ITS DIFFERENCE WITH MOROCCO "IN A SPIRIT OF BROTHERHOOD" AND REGRETTED THAT THIS AGREEMENT HAD NOT BEEN RECEIVED WELL IN A "BROTHER NEIGHBORING COUNTRY." FOR THEIR PART, THE INDIANS AVOIDED ANY PUBLIC MENTION OF THE SAHARA DISPUTE. OULD DADDAH DEPARTED DELHI ON THE EVEING OF AUGUST 25 TO VISIT SEVERAL INDUSTRIAL CENTERS AROUND HYDERABED AND BANGALORE AND IS DUE TO RETRUN TO MAURITANIA FROM BOMBAY ON AUGUST 27.

2 COMMENT: WE SUSPECT THAT THE PURPOSE OF OULD DADDAH'S VISIT TO INDIA WAS BASICALLY THAT OF A CONVENIENT REST STOP ON THE WAY BACK FROM THE COLOMBO NAC. ASIDE FROM SOME VAGUE TALK OF THE POSSIBILITY OF INDIA SENDING SOME INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND DESERT CONTROL EXPERTS TO MAURITANIA "AT A MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TIME." THE VISIT SEEMS TO HAVE PRODUCED LITTLE ELSE. IF OULD DADDAH HAD HOPED TO ENLIST INDIAN SYMPATHY FOR THE MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN POSITION ON THE WESTERN SAHARA, THERE CERTAINLY WAS NO MENTION OF INDIA SUPPORT IN THE PRESS REPORTING, AND THE GOI APPEARS TO HAVE FOLLOWED ITS POLICY OF AVOIDING ANY INVOLVEMENT IN SUCH BILATERAL DISPUTES. SAXBE

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